

**DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING – **DRAFT** MINUTES
THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 2017
ROOM 217
TOWN HALL, WEST HARTFORD, CT**

Call to Order/Roll Call: 4:30 P.M.

Attendance: Jeffrey Gebrian, Chair; Richard Hughes, Fred Fritz, Kimberly Parsons-Whitaker, and Alternate: Ray Giolitto.

Staff: Todd Dumais, Town Planner; Catherine Dorau, Associate Planner.

REFERRAL FROM TOWN COUNCIL:

1. **1445 New Britain Avenue**- *Application on behalf of Seritage SRC Finance LLC ("Applicant"), owner of 1445 New Britain Avenue, West Hartford, Connecticut (the "Property"). The Applicant requests modifications to the existing Special Development District ("SDD #6"), located at 1445 New Britain Avenue. The requested modifications include the redevelopment of both the Sears retail store and the Sears auto center into multiple retail and restaurant tenants. The redeveloped retail building will contain approximately 151,750 square feet and the redeveloped auto center will contain approximately 34,250 square feet (which includes 13,300 SF of unusable basement space). The facades of both buildings will be updated and refurbished. Associated site improvements including modifications to site parking, signage and landscaping are also requested. (Town Council Receipt on December 13, 2016. Town Council public hearing scheduled for January 24, 2017. DRAC receipt on December 22, 2016.) (Previous DRAC study sessions on June 16, 2016, July 14, 2016 and October 27, 2016). **DRAC recommended approval. Vote: 5-0. Motion: Giolitto/Second: Hughes (Giolitto seated for S. Crosby)***

Todd Dumais, Town Planner opened with highlights of the last meeting 12.22.16 with the main points of interest by the DRAC:

- Finish elements of the base of the building – how the base of the buildings were going to meet
- Sidewalks and comments from staff about site amenities – locations of planters, bike racks, etc.
- Provide additional mechanical penthouses and how that would look on the roof
- Request for bus details – which are now on the plans
- Commentary regarding overall site plantings – especially in the large bump outs around the buildings

Daniel Sirk, Architect for the SA Group, LLC was present via a GO TO meeting set-up via computer. He went over the highlights of the changes made based on the last meeting with the DRAC.

The following changes were addressed:

- Base of the REI middle panel
- A. base – raised the base height around the entire front of the building
- B. planters were underneath the glass – flashing & water tightness a concern – they’ve moved them away from the building, overflow drains go to the rear and go between the planter and the building.
- View of rooftop units – they will raise and extend the parapet higher so that’s screened.
- Screening for the trash enclosures – beyond REI - it’s a masonry finish that matches the building and is fully enclosed with a gate system.
- Site Features: Bike racks – standardized – REI has introduced the stand-up type of rack which the DRAC liked
- Bus shelter design – concept shown, detailing reviewed. (Sheet 14 landscape detail) concern by the DRAC was the location and safety of the pedestrians in the bus shelter from the cars parking directly behind it. A raised concrete bench has been added to the shelter. The set-back dimension between the curb and the bus shelter is 18”.
- Snow from the roof was discussed: prior discussion addressed the pitch (kept at minimal) and they’ve thought about it. Also, regarding the ice buildup - Dan said he would make note to have ‘cleats’ installed on the shelter.
- The overall site plantings – enhancement includes additional planting material and benches – the other end added plantings and seating.
- The DRAC asked – re: the large mechanical union on the big building – what about the screening from New Britain Avenue? On the main building they are taking off the large unit. The new roof plan shows small roof-top units. Individual units and the building will be zoned. The finish on the big elevator room is existing – it will be a blended out color.
- HVAC on the small building – they’re proposing small individual screening on each unit. It was noted they HVAC would need to meet the noise ordinance and to consider the angles and directions of the exhaust duct work – in particular to the easterly residential area. They’ll also install spring isolators to minimize vibration.
- The Elmfield Street gate will have a 6 foot opening. Three arborvitaes have been added to the buffer area beyond the wall.
- Modifications/adjustments have been made to the sidewalks and cross walks.
- Additional trees are added to the entrance and in the parking area.

The DRAC appreciated the applicant meeting with them on numerous occasions and their consideration and inclusion of the DRAC’s comments in its revised and final project design.

Dan Sirk also expressed appreciation of the input from the DRAC and noted the Town as having an extremely good process in place to review development plans and appreciated all the input from the DRAC/staff.

REVIEW OF DRAC ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2016 – Received.

TOWN PLANNERS REPORT:

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

2. December 22, 2016 – **Approved Vote: 4-0. Motion:Fritz/Second:Whitaker.**
(Gebrian recused himself.)

ADJOURNMENT - 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Catherine Dorau
Associate Planner

C: Ron Van Winkle, Town Manager
Kimberly Boneham, Deputy Corporation Counsel

Mark McGovern, Director of Community Services
Essie Labrot, Town Clerk

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